

THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF SALT LAKE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board Business Meeting
and Closed Executive Session

February 4, 2014

The Board of Education of Salt Lake City School District met in a Board Business Meeting and Closed Executive Session at 5:35 p.m. on Tuesday, February 4, 2014, in the Board Room of the Administration Building, 440 East 100 South, Salt Lake City, Utah.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Vice President Heather Bennett, J. Michael Clára, Rosemary Emery, Dr. Douglas Nelson, Tiffany Sandberg, Laurel H. Young, and Lavenita Vaitai, Student Member.

Members Excused: President Kristi Swett.

Also Present: Superintendent McKell Withers; Janet Roberts, Business Administrator; Patrick Garcia, Associate Superintendent School Support; Craig Ruesch, Interim Executive Director, Human Resources; Steve Woods, Executive Director, Auxiliary Services; Kelly Orton, Director, Child Nutrition; Kenneth Grover, Director, Career and Technology Education and Secondary School Support; Michael Williams, Director of Development and External Relations; Kristina Kindl, Director of Policy and Legal Services; Shauna Olson, Director, Elementary School Support; Principals Peggy Paterson, Lincoln Elementary School, and Jana Edward, Jackson Elementary School; Samantha Salazar, Assistant Principal, Lincoln Elementary School; Susan McFarland, President, Salt Lake Teachers Association; Sharon Grey, President, Salt Lake Educational Office Personnel Association; Ricky Martinez, President, Buildings & Grounds Employees Association; Janet Clark, representing the Child Nutrition Employees Association; Jason Olsen, Public Information Officer; Nineveh Dinha, *Fox 13 News*; Devon Dolan, *KSL News*; Heidi Hatch, *KUTV News*; Lisa Schencker, *Salt Lake Tribune*; Tina Hatch, Business Administration Office; and others in the audience.

In accordance with the agenda prepared for the Board Business Meeting of February 4, 2014, three motions were made. Items are reported as listed in the agenda and not necessarily in the order they were considered.

The meeting was called to order by Vice President Bennett, who presided.

1. CLOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 5:35 p.m. a motion was made, after which members excused the audience and remained in the board room:

^N(1) That the board meet in Closed Executive Session to consider litigation, negotiations, personnel, and property items. Approval was given to the motion on a vote of 5 to 1 with Mr. Clára voting "No".
**(Nelson and Young)

Mr. Clára read a letter regarding his dissenting vote, and excused himself during a portion of the Closed Session. The letter has been added to the official minutes.

Present for Closed Session were Heather Bennett, J. Michael Clára, except as noted above, Rosemary Emery, Dr. Douglas Nelson, Tiffany Sandberg, Laurel H. Young, McKell Withers, Janet Roberts, Patrick Garcia, Kristina Kindl, and John Robson, board legal counsel from Fabian Attorneys at Law.

VOTE RECORD	AYE	NAY	ABSENT
BENNETT	X		
CLÁRA	2, 3	1	
EMERY	X		
NELSON	X		
SWETT			X
SANDBERG	X		
YOUNG	X		
A Absent	Ab Abstention	F Failed	
N "No" Vote	NA No Action	T Tabled	
W Withdrawn	*Unanimous Approval		
**Members Making Motion			

Board members adjourned from the Closed Executive Session at 6:25 p.m. and returned to the Board Business Meeting at 6:34 p.m.

2. BOARD BUSINESS MEETING

- Vice President Bennett excused President Swett, who is away on official business for the Utah School Boards Association. Vice President Bennett welcomed everyone in the audience. She recognized the presence of Susan McFarland, President, Salt Lake Teachers Association; Sharon Grey, President, Salt Lake Educational Office Personnel Association; Ricky Martinez, President, Buildings & Grounds Employees Association; and Janet Clark, representing the Child Nutrition Employees Association.
- Deonne Constantine and Becky Page, teachers at Lincoln Elementary School, led the audience in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.
- Vice President Bennett and Ms. Young recognized the 2013 National Board Certified teachers from the Salt Lake City School District: Alicia Darden, 4th grade Dual-Immersion teacher, Jackson Elementary School; Mary Lou Oland-Wong, 1st grade Dual-Immersion teacher, Jackson Elementary School; and Rachel Rolf, district mathematics coach. Each described their journey toward the achievement, talked about the benefits for students, and thanked the district for their support. They encouraged all district teachers to work toward National Board Certification. Vice President Bennett congratulated the teachers on their accomplishment, and thanked Dessie Olson, a social studies and world language coach, for her leadership and assistance for teachers attempting this achievement. She recognized all other National Board Certified teachers in attendance.
- Vice President Bennett recognized Jacob Bergquist, a 12th grade student and Sterling Scholar at West High School. She congratulated him on receiving the State AP Scholar Award, an achievement earned by one male and one female in the state. He said he is thankful for the high

quality teachers who instilled in him a love of learning, and is grateful for the availability of AP courses that enhanced his learning experience.

A. CONSENT AGENDA

*(2) Approval was given to the six items included in the Consent Agenda. These items are listed below.

** (Nelson and Sandberg)

1. The Purchasing/Accounting Report, included a breakdown of items costing over and under \$50,000, a payment voucher report that includes travel and professional expenditures, a Budget Report for December 2013, and the School's Financial Reports for elementary, middle and high schools, and Student Body Activities for East, Highland, and West High Schools for the three months ended December 31, 2013.
2. The Human Resources Department Report, included new contract employment for twelve employees, changes for one, and releases for three.
3. Minutes of the Board Business Meeting held January 7, 2014.
4. Minutes of the Board Professional Development and Self-Evaluation held January 13, 2014.
5. Minutes of the Board Study Session held January 21, 2014.
6. Board Meeting Schedule 2014-2015.

B. REQUESTS TO SPEAK

Vice President Bennett noted all requests to speak were regarding the school lunch issues at Uintah Elementary School. She said this is the first meeting of the board since the problem had occurred, and board members have been trying to communicate with parents who expressed their concerns.

1. Sarah Turley, parent of two students at Uintah Elementary School, addressed the board about the school lunch issue at Uintah. Ms. Turley said her daughter was one of the students whose lunch was taken due to a negative balance. She said she wants the district to put children first and bill paying second, and a partial lunch is substandard and not acceptable. She said she thinks the policy or practice should be changed, and all children should be offered a full and hot lunch. She said the payment system issues must be addressed, many parents rushed to the school to pay negative balances to prevent their children from losing lunch, and there should be easier payment methods. Ms. Turley said she is concerned about the accountability for this problem, and feels the lunch worker is being held responsible for a decision she did not make, and did not have the authority to make. She said she would like a direct apology made to the children.
2. Erica Lukes, Uintah Elementary School parent, addressed the board about the school lunch issue at Uintah. Ms. Lukes would like to see responsibility taken by the district for the lunch issue, and is concerned that district policy is the problem. She questioned whether it is acceptable for a district

employee to implement a change at a school without the principal's knowledge or approval, and is concerned with the question of authority. She said teachers have been threatened by email and on social media, and she would like to know what the district is doing to ensure the safety of their employees. She stated she felt the district should have disabled the teachers' Facebook and email accounts. She asked for a solution to the problem, and feels the district can be an example of handling issues in a better manner from this point forward.

3. Jackelin Slack, parent of a fourth grade student at Uintah Elementary School, addressed the board about the school lunch issue at Uintah. Ms. Slack said her daughter was not directly affected by the incident, but she was present to advocate for the other students at the school, as well as the lunch worker. She questioned who thought it was a good idea to take lunches from children, and felt there were many things wrong with the situation. She said shaming kids for something they have no control over is wrong, and is bullying. She said it was ironic to throw away good food, which cost the district money, in order to recover money for accounts that were in arrears. She said she felt it was wrong to put the lunchroom manager on Paid Administrative Leave, due to the fact that she had been placed in an impossible situation, and asked the district to absolve the lunchroom manager of blame and allow her to return to work. She also asked the appropriate people be held accountable, that there be changes to policy and to the online payment system, and that no other children in Utah endure this situation.
4. Lynn Lonardo, parent of a fourth grade student at Uintah Elementary School, addressed the board about the school lunch issue at Uintah. Ms. Lonardo said her daughter's lunch was taken because of an outstanding balance. She said in the past her daughter would have been allowed to eat lunch, she would have been notified of the negative balance, and the balance would have been paid. She said she was not aware of the new lunch accounting system, and had not been informed of her negative balance, but said she realizes it is her responsibility to keep track of her daughter's lunch balance. She said the policy of taking lunches from children is egregious, and punishes children for things over which they have no control. She said she feels a fund should be established to cover the cost of lunches for students with negative balances, allowing collection attempts to be made while ensuring the children are fed a full, nutritious lunch. She said the district policy regarding lunches is vague, and a clearly stated policy which allows all students access to lunch is immediately required. Ms. Lonardo said the national publicity has been an embarrassment, but so has the level of public outrage. She said as a dietician she believes none of the students involved went hungry that day, though there are underprivileged children who do. She said the lunchroom staff should not be held responsible for the decisions of their superiors, and that Kelly Orton and his staff should be held accountable. She said Uintah is an amazing school, filled with devoted teachers and staff, and she hopes the lunchroom manager will choose to return to work.

C. REPORTS

1. Highlights from School Improvement Plan.

Lincoln Elementary School. Peggy Paterson, Lincoln Elementary School Principal, provided the board with a report on Lincoln. She introduced Samantha Salazar, Assistant Principal; Becky Page and Sue Martin, kindergarten teachers; Melanie Dawson, Administrative PhD Intern; Deonne

Constantine, second grade teacher; and Annika Jones, Community Learning Center (CLC) Coordinator.

Ms. Paterson said Lincoln Elementary School is a unique community with wonderful support from the teachers. She said 85% of Lincoln students receive free and reduced lunch, there are fifteen languages spoken by Lincoln students, 46% of the students are English Language Learners, and students come from very diverse neighborhoods. She said the CLC at Lincoln gives families a place to go, offers a variety of programs and classes, helps with secondary education, and other great resources. She said there have been significant gains in all academic areas of the Utah Comprehensive Accountability System (UCAS) scores at Lincoln over the last year, in part due to district provided support. She said participating in the University of Virginia School Turnaround Partnership helped her create a 90-day plan to identify the root causes of issues, as well as a way to address those issues. Ms. Paterson said the plan includes curriculum alignment, professional development, mentoring, weekly collaboration with teachers and coaches, and school wide behavior plans. She said they are still working on attendance issues, improving science instruction, expanding the extended day program, and increasing parental involvement in the School Community Council (SCC).

Ms. Paterson said the community and staff of Lincoln Elementary are great, and she thanked the teachers and parents who work in the school.

The board congratulated Ms. Paterson and her staff for the positive changes at Lincoln Elementary, and praised their efforts to keep SCC agendas and minutes up-to-date on the school's Website. Superintendent Withers thanked the staff of Lincoln, and said the district is looking for ways to expand the relationship with the Utah Food Bank, improve the area within the school boundaries, continue the investment in Professional Development, and help the school. A copy of the Lincoln Elementary report has been included in the official minutes.

2. School Lunch Issues. Superintendent Withers introduced Steve Woods, Executive Director, Auxiliary Services, and Kelly Orton, Director, Child Nutrition. He said the lunch incident that occurred at Uintah Elementary School was initially met with shock, and was a circumstance where the district had failed to support young children with nutrition and positive relationships with adults. He said Mr. Woods and Mr. Orton were present to discuss what broke down, what changes will happen, and to give a progress report on the investigation to the board.

Mr. Orton thanked the board for the opportunity to report on what had occurred at Uintah Elementary. He shared a report regarding what occurred, including an analysis of what broke down and planned changes. A copy of the report has been added to the official minutes. He explained the change from PayPams to MyPaymentsPlus, noting the new system's capabilities to track inventory and help control costs, and making the application for free and reduced lunches quicker. He described additional necessary information and said an initial set-up payment is required in order for parents to receive notifications from the new system when balances are low or negative, and noted the district is working with the software manufacturer to ensure all parents who use the system will receive notifications. He stressed that parents can apply for free and reduced lunches at any time during the school year, stating 63% of students in the district currently qualify for free lunch. He said his department will help the schools contact parents whose accounts are in arrears, using several methods, including calls, emails, and electronic notifications.

Mr. Orton said he is working to update department procedures so they are clear and consistent across the district. He said he will continue to provide training to Child Nutrition employees. He noted in the past each principal set the procedures at the school level, which has caused confusion. Mr. Woods reiterated his support of the Child Nutrition department and his commitment to ensuring there are not problems in the future.

Vice President Bennett said she talked to fellow board members and parents, and the board could not justify what happened. She said it was distressing to learn this was not an isolated incident in the district or the state. Some board members expressed concern that employees felt undue pressure, leading to their participation in this incident. Ms. Bennett said the investigation will try to determine why the employees involved felt taking lunches was the appropriate thing to do. Board members acknowledged there were two main problems: parents had a hard time keeping balances current, which can be traced to the new system; and lunches being taken away, which was not a consequence of the new system. Board members said parents are asking for an apology to the children, and Mr. Orton said he would find a way to do so.

Janet Roberts told board members the district has a deficit due to non-payment of paid lunches of approximately \$15,000 in the lunch program each year, which is covered by the individual schools using donations, PTA funds, or school funds at the end of the school year.

Superintendent Withers restated that no student would ever have food taken from them again in the district. He said advocating for young people is the district's mission, and the district has the most robust summer lunch program in the state in an effort to feed children who may go hungry. He said after the conclusion of the formal investigation, he hopes to initiate an independent group to address student hunger issues and to communicate with the community. He told the board some parents choose not to share financial information that would qualify them for free lunch, and the district is looking for ways to mitigate that issue. He publicly thanked those who called the district with offers of help, stating it was the right way to approach a solution.

Vice President Bennett noted parents are asking that children always be offered a full lunch, and said the costs of providing the lunches would need to be addressed. Ms. Roberts and Mr. Orton said they will study the expense of providing lunches to all students. Ms. Bennett thanked Mr. Orton and Mr. Woods for the report. She made it clear the Paid Administrative Leave for the employees involved was not a disciplinary action, but was routine during an investigation, and was also a way to protect employees who have been threatened.

D. DISCUSSION AGENDA

1. Recommended 2014-2015 Fee Schedule. Kenneth Grover, Director, Career and Technology Education and Secondary School Support, presented the 2014-2015 Fee Schedule to the board. He noted a few changes to the fees from the last school year, explaining the increases and decreases. He said monies collected as fees are kept at the individual schools to support the programs for which they were collected. A copy of the Fee Schedule has been included in the official minutes.

The board thanked Mr. Grover for the information, and agreed to include the 2014-2015 Fee Schedule on the Limited Consent Agenda for the March 4, 2014 Board Business Meeting.

2. Budget Development. Janet Roberts, Business Administrator, distributed General Education Standard Allocations information to the board. She said the first document included FTE allocations for the district, the second document included monetary allocations for the district, and the final document was a spreadsheet detailing the distribution of General Education funds to schools.

Ms. Roberts said the allocations change each year, based on enrollment, at-risk allocations, and Average Daily Membership (ADM). She said principals have a significant amount of discretionary funding, the use of that funding is decided at a school level, and budget details are included in the School Improvement Plans presented to the board. Copies of the budget handouts have been included in the official minutes.

E. ACTION AGENDA

There were no Action Agenda items.

F. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

1. Miscellaneous Updates:

Proposed Legislation and Priority Bills. Superintendent Withers distributed a Legislative Tracking Sheet to board members and said the Joint Legislative Committee will continue to meet to discuss legislation. He discussed Senate Bill 91 (SB91), which would delay the end of county-wide equalization until 2020, and would have a heavy financial impact on the district. He said information regarding priority legislation will be available on the district Web site this week. A copy of the Legislative Tracking Sheet has been included in the official minutes.

2. Other Superintendent Reports:

Superintendent Withers recognized four students from the district who won the Martin Luther King Jr. Youth Leadership Award: Daniel Lui, a senior at West High School; Luisa Lopez, a sophomore at West High School; and Gema Aleman and Luisa Botchway, both eighth-grade students at Bryant Middle School. He congratulated the students, and said only fifteen awards were given statewide.

Superintendent Withers reported that he and Vice President Bennett attended the Pioneer Park Coalition meeting. He said the meeting included representatives from the city and county, and focused on long term planning for the park and investment in that area of the city, including schools and Community Learning Centers.

Superintendent Withers thanked Ken Grover for coordinating the Sterling Scholar Banquet to celebrate Sterling Scholars from all district high schools. He congratulated the students for their achievements.

Superintendent Withers noted the Board Study Session scheduled for March 18, 2014, conflicted with the Democratic Caucus Meetings, and asked board members for options to resolve the conflict. He said an email would be sent to board members to determine a resolution.

Ms. Young said she would like to have a discussion about the use of social media in the district as a way to communicate with patrons, and asked if it could be scheduled for a future meeting.

G. ADJOURNMENT

Following a motion by Ms. Young, seconded by Dr. Nelson, the meeting was adjourned at 8:32 p.m.

Janet M. Roberts
Business Administrator

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